

**Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council**

**June 17, 2003  
Marathon Garden Club**

**FINAL MINUTES**

**Members Present**

Fran Decker	Martin Moe
Todd Firm	Ken Nedimyer
Debra Harrison	George Neugent
David Hawtof	Bruce Popham
Don Kincaid	Deborah Shaw
Nancy Klingener	

**Alternates Present**

Greg DiDomenico  
Jerry Lorenz  
Sheila Mullins

**Call to Order** 9:12 a.m.

**Approval of Minutes/Adoption of Agenda**

The minutes of the April 8, 2003 meeting were approved as presented. The agenda for this meeting was adopted as presented.

**Environmental Hero Award: presentation to Loretta Lawrence by Sanctuary Managers and Council Chair**

Mr. Causey, Mr. Riley and Chair Neugent presented Loretta Lawrence of Tavernier with a plaque recognizing her as the recipient of the sixth annual NOAA Environmental Hero Award. Since 1996 Loretta has been involved with a variety of scientific projects in the Sanctuary including Florida Bay Watch, Sea Stewards, projects involving lobster, Queen Conch, *Diadema*, corals and algae. Most recently she has been a RECON instructor in the Keys. Mr. Causey read a letter from Vice Admiral Conrad Lautenbacher congratulating her on behalf of the 12,000 NOAA employees, for being the outstanding Environmental Hero within the entire National Marine Sanctuary Program.

**Recent Outbreak of Coral Diseases in the Keys – Billy Causey**

Mr. Causey explained the reason for the closure of two patch reefs off Key Largo in the White Banks/Dry Rocks area for 60 days under the Sanctuary's temporary emergency closure authority. He said that scientists with NOAA Fisheries had reported a new disease killing staghorn coral at an alarming rate on those reefs, and that NOAA Beaufort Laboratory recommended closing the area to enable scientists to conduct experiments which will determine the nature and epidemiology of the disease. Alternative mooring fields are being developed for snorkel charter boats dependent on those reefs.

### **Sanctuary Superintendent's Report – Mary Tagliarieni**

Ms. Tagliarieni presented the attached report. She added that on Friday June 20<sup>th</sup> the Sanctuary and NOAA South Florida Ecosystem Project is hosting the Negotiating Coastal Resources training for federal, state and county agencies, members of the Advisory Council and members of non-profits at the Marathon Garden Club. Questions from the Council concerned reef modules in Key West Harbor and the agency responsible for cultural material in Key West Harbor. The Piney Point phosphate mine in Tampa Bay was also discussed. Mr. Causey presented his apologies and left the meeting to attend a workshop in Hawaii.

### **Public Comment**

J. Krueger Nicholson of Outward Bound introduced himself and stated that he is a member of a group that is trying to establish a paddle trail through the Keys. The group is working with the National Park Service, John Pennekamp State Park and Monroe County Marine Resources Divisions and would like to work with the Sanctuary. He invited all present to attend the next group meeting on Monday, July 14<sup>th</sup> at 6.00 p.m. at the Banana Bay resort in Marathon.

Captain Steve Leopold, President of the Islamorada Charter Boat Association representing approximately 150 captains and their mates, requested that the Advisory Council consider again the issue of hair-hooking ballyhoo in the Sanctuary Preservation Areas. He presented some background on sailfishing and requested that the issue be put on the August agenda. Council members debated whether or not to revisit the subject.

Sheri Sullenger of the Florida Keys Wild Dolphin Alliance said that attempts to develop a special use permit had hit a wall with NOAA Fisheries regulations and clarified that when talking about a limited entry permit, it was to apply to any company that has licensing and insurance regulations and was operating within Marine Mammal Protection Act regulations and recommendations. She presented detailed recommendations from the Alliance. It was suggested that action could be taken through law enforcement and through the County.

Dr. David Hawtof of Key West described the initial chaos at the recent pilot whale stranding in the Content Keys, including no visible chain of command, inadequate protection of volunteers, late arrival of the veterinarian, inadequate collection of scientific data from released animals and the lack of an overall protocol covering marine mammal strandings. He moved that the National Marine Fisheries immediately develop a protocol for care, training of volunteer personnel and focus on individuals holding Letters of Agreement, enabling them to take care of marine mammals. He encouraged that appropriate record keeping and research with the information be obtained, and that there should be follow-up on recently released animals. He further recommended that appropriate and distinctive clothing be used to designate who is in charge.

Art Cooper of the Marine Mammal Rescue Foundation noted that since the Sanctuary hosted a workshop on marine mammals in January 2002, there has been a much more cooperative working environment between the Marine Mammal Conservancy, Marine

Mammal Rescue Foundation and the National Marine Fisheries Service and that many things have been rectified, including some of the issues raised by Dr. Hawtof. He reported that the Letter of Agreement between his group and the Marine Mammal Conservancy reissuing a two-year agreement for rehabilitation went to NMFS on June 8, 2003 and will be forthcoming shortly.

Laura Engleby of National Marine Fisheries Service said that this mass stranding was perhaps the most logistically challenging that anyone in the huge southeastern stranding network has been on. She discussed common goals amongst volunteer groups and agency staff particularly the welfare of the animals, and the need to establish a media strategy as well as facilitating a Keys-wide working group to come up with a local/regional training response guide to ensure uniformity of information. She demonstrated the Cape Cod stranding and rehabilitation protocol. Discussion followed concerning developing a local protocol within a national framework and the importance of education and local knowledge. Ms. Engleby noted, upon questioning, that NMFS had scheduled a visit to the Keys in order to come up with an inventory of emergency rehabilitation sites, but the visit was pre-empted by the stranding.

Mr. Cooper said that he and Rick Trout and Robert Lingenfelter will identify potential sites throughout the Keys and will then tour them with NMFS who will give the final determination on their suitability. Upon questioning by Chair Neugent, he indicated that although things are not as far along as could be wished, that humongous strides have been made in the last two months. Chair Neugent said that the County, NMFS and the Sanctuary have been working on a series of debriefings. Dr. Hawtof withdrew his motion.

Ms Klingener moved that the Council write a letter to Dr. Bill Hogarth expressing strong concern about the proliferation of wild dolphin tour operators in Key West and requesting that he work with the Sanctuary and other parts of NOAA to investigate methods of managing dolphin viewing tours for the protection of the wildlife. The motion was seconded by Dr. Shaw and passed unanimously upon voice vote.

**Video taken from the Stars and Stripes in the dolphin viewing area near Key West – Capt. Don Kincaid**

Capt. Kincaid showed a short video of some of the commercial operations viewing bottlenose dolphins. He said that the animals did not seem to be disturbed by the operations, and he had never seen dolphins being fed.

**Florida Department of Environmental Protection Report – Danny Riley**

Mr. Riley, the Assistant Director at DEP office of Coastal and Aquatic Managed Areas represented Director Katherine Andrews. He reported on the recent establishment of the South East Florida Action Strategy (SEFAS) which met in Ft. Lauderdale at the end of May to develop a first draft coral reef conservation and management plan for southeast Florida from Dade County to Hobie Sound. The area is being considered as a State Aquatic Preserve. He mentioned that DEP is preparing the annual report which will be presented to the Board of Trustees in August. He noted that state park staff would like to

join the federal/state Sanctuary grounding response in the non-criminal prosecution of groundings and will utilize federal authority in these cases to recover funds. Mr. Riley announced the appointment of Anne McCarthy as the new Lower Region manager from the State of Florida, with extensive experience in grounding cases.

### **Sanctuary Enforcement Report – Captain Jayson Horadam**

Capt Horadam said that it is possible to have NMFS undercover agents address the dolphin tour issue in Key West, and see if violations are taking place. He introduced new academy graduates Officer Mark Suckell, Officer Elizabeth McCoy and Officer Lance Burdett who will be joining the Sanctuary Enforcement Team. They bring a wealth and breadth of experience to their new posts on the Point Monroe and the Lower Keys nearshore.

Capt Horadam gave a PowerPoint presentation of his recent visit to Belize to establish a reciprocal program between FKNMS and the Belize marine park system law enforcement. He noted that both places have many common attributes and problems. He reported that ten park rangers subsequently visited the Florida Keys and participated actively with officers here. He observed that although the rangers from Belize do not enjoy the technological advantages available to enforcement officers here, they are able to achieve an enormous amount through proactive policies, dedication and community involvement.

### ***Diadema* Recovery in St. Thomas: hope for the Keys – Ken Nedimyer (Sealife)**

Mr. Nedimyer gave a PowerPoint presentation based on a visit to St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands. He contrasted several sites in a small bay with differential *Diadema* presence and abundance and demonstrated clearly the positive effect on coral cover, health and diversity of significant numbers of long-spined urchins. He described the situation in the Florida Keys, where *Diadema* have not rebounded significantly, although in a patch off Duck Key there is a cluster of urchins that has cleaned the macroalgae down to the bare rock, unlike a typical nearshore coral colony covered in *Sargassum*. Martin Moe discussed the *Diadema* restoration project that he is conducting with Mr. Nedimyer and the results reported in the attached fact sheet.

### **Report on New Ground Reef, Marquesas – Corey Malcom (Mel Fisher Maritime Heritage Society)**

Mr. Malcom said that the goal of the Society is to investigate and present subjects of the Keys' maritime past to the public, especially as reflected in shipwrecks. Much of the field work is done in conjunction with the RPM Nautical Foundation of Key West. He reported on the discovery of the English slave ship, the Henrietta Marie, which sank on New Ground Reef west of the Marquesas in 1700. Although discovered in 1972, most of the work was carried out in 1983-4 when two canons and a quantity of artifacts were recovered. In 1998 the Mel Fisher Maritime Heritage Society became involved and conducted a magnetometer survey that revealed a number of magnetic anomalies in the area of the Henrietta Marie debris field, which also contains a monument to all Africans forced to sail across the Atlantic in the slave trade; the monument was placed by the National Association of Black Scuba Divers in 1993. In 2001, after re-locating and

recording the hull of the ship, the Society conducted a more detailed magnetometer survey, permitted by the Sanctuary, of the entire 9 by 3 mile reef. Mr. Malcom said that the group dived on and excavated one of the most promising anomalies in order to locate canons from the wreck of the Henrietta Marie. Despite the initial recovery of a trade bead, blackened rocks and pieces of wood turned out not to be the ballast and dunnage of the colonial era ship, but instead pre-inundation remains from a forest fire C14 dated to 8,400 years before present. He observed that there is a huge amount of information available from this site about the palaeo-environments of Florida before the reefs formed about 6,000 years ago with rising sea-levels. The Society is going to continue to find out more about the Henrietta Marie.

**Update on Decompartmentalization and the L67 Canals – Dr. Jerry Lorenz (Audubon Society)**

Dr. Lorenz with the aid of a map indicated the canals to be removed from the Everglades Protection Area as part of the Everglades restoration effort. He said that the canals act as a conduit for water as well as invasive exotic species and are a sink for largemouth bass and not a source. He observed that with the infilling of the canals there will still be fish concentrations in alligator holes during the dry season and that fisheries in peripheral canals on either side of the Everglades Protection Area will benefit as well. Modeling of canal removal will take place over the next 3-4 months. Discussion followed concerning the fiscal effects as well as environmental effects caused by invasive exotics, and the need for those involved in restoration projects to come to the Keys to inform the local constituency.

Ms. Tagliareni said that the Outreach and Education Group of CERP is going to hold workshops in the Keys on information gathering, one of which will be held on July 15<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m. at the Marathon Garden Club.

**Items for the August 19, 2003 Meeting**

- Status of the Navy dredging operation in Key West
- Discussion of the Pew Oceans Report
- Lobster Virus Study
- “Dolphin Aware Tour Operator” workshops
- *Diadema* restoration by Alina Szmant

Ms. Harrison moved that ballyhoo hair-hooking in SPAs be added to the August agenda. The motion was seconded by Mr. Popham. After considerable discussion among Council members, Ms Harrison re-stated her motion that the Sanctuary Advisory Council agenda an item for the August 19 meeting to allow a discussion by the Islamorada Charter Boat Association on the use of hair-hooks in certain SPAs for purpose of bait fishing. The motion passed with a majority vote.

**Adjourned 12:34 p.m.**